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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, masculinity and femininity have been conceptualized as being bipolar opposites of a single continuum. Recently, a new perspective has emerged which conceptualized masculinity and femininity as separate dimensions that can vary independently. From this concept has emerged androgyny, which denotes the integration of masculine and feminine traits in one person. The present study was designed to test the hypothesis that women administrators in higher education, being in nontraditional female roles, will tend to be androgynous. A sample of male and female administrators was questioned using various scales. The findings support the concept that masculinity and femininity are not bipolar opposites of a single continuum. The results also tend to support the hypothesis that women administrators in higher education are not necessarily less feminine than other women. Rather than losing their femininity, women administrators may have incorporated additional masculine traits. Men, on the other hand, tend not to be incorporating feminine traits into their personalities.
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Women Administrators: Feminine, Masculine, or Androgynous?

A popular myth contends that women are not suited to administrative roles (Fishel and Pottker, 1977). Women are stereotyped as being less objective, less independent, less logical, less assertive, less ambitious, and less competent than men. Young (1976) points out several other popular misconceptions concerning women in administration: (a) Women do not have the education and credentials required for administrative positions; (b) women do not aspire to administrative positions; (c) women are more committed to their roles as wives and mothers than to their professional roles; and (d) women do not have to work--their jobs merely provide second incomes for their families.

These common stereotypes have been used to relegate women to subordinate positions in educational institutions while men are promoted to the administrative ranks, especially in higher education. Gordon and Ball (1977) state that institutions are doing little to train, recruit, and promote women into administrative positions. Oltman (1970) found that women are "conspicuously lacking" in policy-making positions in colleges and universities. There are, however, more opportunities for women administrators in women's colleges and small or private colleges than in large and public institutions. The study went on to show that women administrators tend to be employed in positions requiring specific skills and attention to detail; thus, women are more likely to hold positions as head librarian, director of placement, director of financial aid, or college counselor. Although 90% of the colleges and universities surveyed stated that their promotional policies were the same for men and women, the women were underrepresented as department chairmen. In fact, 34 institutions admitted that no women were heads of academic departments. In schools where women did hold academic chairmanships, they tended to be in the fields of home economics,

physical education, English, languages, nursing, and education. In a study of state universities and land grant colleges, Arter (1972) discovered that over one-half of the institutions did not have women in top-level administrative positions.

While the majority of women in education will never become administrators, a few women have broken into that male-dominated world. These women have been stereotyped as being aggressive, masculine, and anti-feminist, but are they really less feminine than women in non-administrative careers?

Traditionally, masculinity and femininity have been conceptualized as being bipolar opposites of a single continuum. Bakan (1966) suggested that individuals are characterized by agency and communion. Agency, being masculine, refers to self-assertion, self-protection, and self-expansion; communion, being feminine, refers to openness, cooperation, nurturance. Parsons and Bales (1955) suggest similar components as instrumental and expressive. Thus, a person is either agentic or communal, instrumental or expressive, masculine or feminine, but not both. Recently a new perspective has emerged in the psychological literature. Masculinity and femininity are conceptualized as separate dimensions that can vary independently. From this concept has emerged androgyny which denotes the integration of masculine and feminine traits in one person (Bem, 1974; Bem, 1975; Bem, 1977; Bem, 1979; Bem and Lenny, 1976; Bem, Martyna and Watson, 1976; Foushee, Helmreich, and Spence, 1979; Spence and Helmreich, 1978; and Spence and Helmreich, 1979). The concept of androgyny implies that an individual can be both assertive and expressive, both masculine and feminine depending upon the situation.

Bem (1975) found androgynous subjects to be able to vary their behavior depending upon its situational appropriateness. Androgynous subjects displayed independence when encountering pressure to conform and nurturance when given the opportunity to play with a kitten. Similarly, Bem, Martyna and Watson (1976)

found feminine and androgynous subjects to be more nurturant than masculine subjects. Bem and Lenney (1976) showed that sex-typed subjects preferred sex-appropriate activities and experienced the most psychological discomfort when performing sex-inappropriate activities. These studies suggest that androgynous individuals are more flexible in their behavior patterns.

Spence and Helmreich (1978) have applied the concept of androgyny to the problem of assessing achievement motivation in women. They found androgynous individuals showed the highest levels of achievement motivation. In a similar study of female athletes, Harris and Jennings (1978) concluded that androgynous and masculine individuals were more achievement oriented than feminine or undifferentiated (those scoring low on both masculinity and femininity) individuals.

Both Bem (1976) and Marecek (1979) have argued that androgyny is the most appropriate sexual role, particularly for women, in a society where women are becoming liberated and are assuming non-traditional roles. Welch (1979) found support for this position. Similarly, McBee, Murray, and Suddick (1976) concluded that women in non-traditional, masculine-stereotyped activities have higher self-esteem than women in more traditional, feminine roles. Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1975) also found that androgynous individuals scored higher in self-esteem than masculine, feminine, or undifferentiated individuals.

The present study was designed to test the hypothesis that women administrators in higher education, being in non-traditional female roles, will tend to be androgynous, i.e., they will tend to be high in both masculine and feminine traits.

Methods

The sample consisted of 68 female and male administrators at New Mexico State University and the University of Texas at El Paso. Thirty-six women

administrators were identified. The women occupied full-time positions at the two universities and were involved in various tasks of administration, i.e., planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting. Thirty-four of the 36 women administrators agreed to participate in the study. The 34 male administrators who participated in the study were randomly selected from those who held positions similar to the female respondents. Every effort was made to match the two groups according to their positions; this was not always possible since female administrators tended to have lower positions within the given rank as compared to male administrators.

A questionnaire was developed which included items from the Bem Sex Role Inventory, Work and Family Orientation Questionnaire, Texas Social Behavior Inventory, and Attitudes Toward Women Scale. The questionnaire was administered to the 68 administrators. In order to provide a comparison, the same instrument was given to a group of students and public school educators who were enrolled in undergraduate education and psychology classes at New Mexico State University during the summer term. The group consisted of 111 students (39 men and 72 women), 69 public school teachers (15 men and 54 women), and 13 public school administrators (5 men and 8 women).

The Bem Sex Role Inventory (1974) contains three scales: (a) masculinity scale; (b) femininity scale; and (c) social desirability scale. The masculinity and femininity scales were developed on the assumption that a sex-typed person is "someone who has internalized society's sex-typed standards of desirable behavior for men and women" (Bem, 1974, p. 155). A person is defined as masculine, feminine, androgynous, or undifferentiated on the basis of a median split method (Bem, 1977). Thus, a person whose masculinity score is high and whose femininity score is low is designated as masculine, and a person whose femininity score is high and whose masculinity score is low is said to be feminine. An androgynous

person is one who scores high on both masculinity and femininity scales. Similarly, a person is said to be undifferentiated if his/her scores on both masculinity and femininity scales are low. The social desirability scale is neutral with regard to sex and serves primarily to provide a neutral context for the socially desirable traits such as helpful, reliable, and conscientious.

The Work and Family Orientation Questionnaire (Spence and Helmreich, 1978) was designed to measure achievement motivation and has four sub-component scales. They are (a) work--the desire to work hard and keey busy; (b) mastery--the desire to cope with challenging tasks and to meet inner standards of excellence; (c) competitiveness--a desire to win over other people; and (d) personal unconcern--being unconcerned with others' negative reactions to one's achievement. The Social Behavior Inventory (Spence and Helmreich, 1978) is essentially a measure of self-esteem. The Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence and Helmreich, 1978) measures one's belief concerning the appropriate roles for women and a higher score indicates a more pro-feminist stance.

Results

Demographic Information of Higher Education Administrators

As would be expected, the female administrators tended to be younger than the male administrators. Thirty-five percent of the women administrators were under 40 years of age as compared to only 15% of the men. Half of the male and 35% of the female administrators were between 40 and 50 years of age.

Women administrators also tended to have fewer academic degrees than their male counterparts. Of the women administrators, 14.7% had a bachelor's degree or less; 47.1% had a master's degree; and 38.2% had a doctorate. More than one-half (52.9%) of the male administrators, on the other hand, had earned a doctorate; 41.2% had a master's degree; and only 5.8% had a bachelor's degree or less.

The male administrators were more likely than the female administrators to be married: 88.2% of the men were married; 2.9% were single; and 8.8% were separated or divorced. In comparison, 41.2% of the women were married; 41.2% were single; and 17.6% were separated or divorced. The majority of the male respondents (91.2%) had children whereas approximately half of the women (55.9%) had children.

Analysis of Participants' Responses to the Questionnaire

Product moment correlation at 0.05 level revealed that participants' masculinity scores correlated positively with their ages, femininity, social desirability, competition, mastery, self-esteem, and attitudes toward women scores. Participants' femininity scores correlated positively only with their masculinity, social desirability, work, and negatively with competition scores. Self-esteem scores correlated positively with participants' ages, social desirability, competition, mastery, work, personal unconcern, and attitudes toward women scores. Attitudes toward women scores correlated positively with mastery scores.

Due to the limited number of public school administrators (N = 13) in the present sample, they were excluded from the following analyses comparing college students, public school teachers and higher education (HE) administrators. Table 1 summarizes the means of participants in various scales according to groups (students, teachers, and HE administrators), and sex (males and females). Note the significant differences between sexes consistently appeared in all groups in femininity and attitudes toward women scales, indicating persistently higher femininity scores and pro-feminist attitudes in women as compared to men, whereas with the exception of college students, there was no sex difference in regard to masculinity scores. No sex difference was found in motivation scores.

Insert Table 1 about here

Analysis of variance at 0.05 level, and if significant, Tukey's LSD test were used to compare the difference between students, teachers, and HE administrators in masculinity, femininity, social desirability, motivation, self-esteem and attitudes toward women scales. HE administrators had higher masculinity, social desirability, and self-esteem scores than the other two groups which did not differ. Teachers had higher femininity scores than the other two groups which did not differ. On the Attitudes Toward Women Scale, teachers and HE administrators both had more pro-feminist scores than students. There were no significant differences in achievement motivation scores between groups.

Among the male sample, the only significant difference found between students, teachers and HE administrators was on the social desirability scale, which showed that administrators scored higher than teachers and students. On the contrary, among the female sample many significant differences were found. Female HE administrators had higher masculinity, social desirability, self-esteem, mastery, and work scores than female students and teachers, whereas the latter groups did not differ. On the femininity scale, female teachers had higher scores than female HE administrators and students which did not differ. On the Attitudes Toward Women Scale, both female HE administrators and female teachers had similar and higher scores than that of female students.

Analysis of Participants' Responses to Questionnaire According to Androgyny, Masculinity, Femininity, and Undifferentiated Categories

The Stanford undergraduates' masculinity and femininity medians (4.89 and 4.76) as reported by Bem (1975) were used in the median split method to classify each of the 261 participants into one of the four categories: androgyny, masculinity, femininity, and undifferentiated. Analysis of variance at 0.05 level, and if significant, Tukey's LSD test were employed to test the difference between these four groups in their motivation, self-esteem, and pro-feminist attitude scores.

Androgynous and masculine participants had consistently higher scores than feminine and undifferentiated participants on the self-esteem scale and on the competition, mastery, and work scales of achievement motivation, whereas no difference was found in regard to the personal unconcern and attitudes toward women scales. Among the male sample, the four categories were almost indistinguishable in most of the measurement scales; whereas among the female sample, identical pattern as found in the total sample emerged again. Female androgynous and masculine participants had consistently higher scores than the other two groups on the self-esteem scale, and on the competition, mastery, and work scales. The only different pattern from the total sample was that female masculine participants had higher attitudes toward women scores (pro-feminist attitudes) as compared to the other three groups.

Chi Square Analyses of Students, Teachers, and Higher Education Administrators in Androgyny, Masculine, Feminine, and Undifferentiated Categories

Chi square analysis at 0.05 level revealed that HE administrators tended to be more likely to be classified as masculine and less likely to be classified as feminine as compared to students and teachers. Among the male sample, no difference was found between groups in their distribution on the four categories. Among the female sample, HE administrators tended to be classified as androgynous and masculine whereas students and teachers tended to be classified as feminine.

Discussion

The present findings support the concept propounded by Bem (1974) and Spence and Helmreich (1978) that masculinity and femininity are not bipolar opposites of a single continuum, rather two separate dimensions. A persistently moderate yet positive correlation was found between masculinity and femininity scores similar to what was reported by other researchers (Spence and Helmreich, 1978). Indeed, instrumentality need not be achieved at the expense of expressivity.

The results also tend to support the hypothesis that women administrators in higher education are not necessarily less feminine than other women, such as college coeds. Rather than losing their femininity, women administrators may have incorporated additional masculine traits, such as self-reliance, ambition, and assertiveness, in order to succeed in their non-traditional roles. Women administrators are more likely to be classified as androgynous or masculine whereas women teachers and students are more likely to be classified as feminine, which supports earlier findings on female scientists (Spence and Helmreich, 1978) and female varsity athletes (Harris and Jennings, 1978; Spence and Helmreich, 1978). Those previous studies using a different instrument, Personal Attributes Questionnaire, also found that women in non-traditional roles were not necessarily less feminine, but were more likely to be classified as androgynous or masculine and to exhibit higher levels of achievement motivation.

Female higher education administrators differ drastically from female teachers and students in many other significant ways. Compared to the other women, female administrators scored higher on masculinity, self-esteem, social desirability, and some dimensions of achievement motivation, i.e., work and mastery, but not on other dimensions, i.e., competitiveness and personal unconcern. This group of higher education administrators appears to be self-confident, socially adaptive women who are dedicated to work and concerned with competing with themselves for excellence rather than competing with other people.

Whereas female administrators differ significantly from female teachers and students, male administrators, on the other hand, tend to be indistinguishable from male teachers and students in their personality variables and achievement motivation, except that male administrators had higher scores in socially desirable traits. This finding is reminiscent of a similar study (Spence and Helmreich, 1978) which found that male scientists were almost identical to male students in

their masculinity and femininity scores whereas female scientists differed drastically from female students.

It is interesting to note that female higher education administrators in the present study, although differing significantly from female teachers and students, are similar to male administrators in many dimensions measured except that female administrators were more feminine and had stronger pro-feminist stance. Female administrators, however, differ from male administrators in that they tend to be younger, less educated, single and less likely to have children. It seems that marriage and family enhances the career of male administrators, but not that of the female administrators. Perhaps non-traditional careers such as administration attract women who are disinterested in traditional female roles as mothers and wives. Another explanation may be that men are intimidated by career oriented women and do not perceive these women to be suitable marriage partners. It is also possible that in order to be successful in this non-traditional arena, these women administrators may have to make a compromise between career and family whereas no such compromise is needed for male administrators.

Within each of the administrator, teacher and student groups, women persistently showed stronger pro-feminist attitudes and higher femininity scores than men. Along with higher educational attainments, this group of women tends to be career oriented and, therefore, is understandably biased toward a more liberated stance as compared to the general female population. This is further supported by the finding that female administrators and teachers tend to have stronger pro-feminist attitudes than female students. A general pattern which emerged from the comparisons of sexes within each of the three groups indicates a trend that as women become more career oriented, they become just as masculine as men, whereas men have not altered their sex-role orientation by becoming more feminine.

Thus, male college students had higher masculine scores than female college students, but female teachers and administrators were equally as masculine as male teachers and administrators. Masculinity is found in the present study to correlate positively with achievement motivation, self-esteem and attitudes toward the feminist movement, as also indicated in the previous studies (McBee, Murray, and Suddick, 1976; Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp, 1975). Femininity, on the contrary, is found to correlate with relatively few dimensions; it correlates positively only with socially desirable traits and work orientation, and negatively with competitiveness. It seems that masculinity, which is associated with such traits as aggressiveness and self-reliance, is more valued than femininity in our achievement-oriented society and is a stronger determinant of career development.

The concept of androgyny calls for the integration of masculine and feminine traits in a person. An androgynous person is one who can be both assertive and sensitive, agentic and communal, instrumental and expressive, and is flexible in exhibiting the situationally appropriate behavior. Most women who have made it into this non-traditional world of higher education administration had to expand beyond the traditionally defined feminine boundaries and to adopt masculine attributes, thereby becoming flexible and androgynous. As women are becoming liberated and entering non-traditional careers, they tend to be adopting many masculine-oriented behavior. Men, on the other hand, tend <u>not</u> to be incorporating feminine traits into their personalities. Perhaps there is a need for society to place equal value on masculine and feminine traits which would create the need and the climate for both men and women to become androgynous.

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Footnote

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Table 1

College Students, Public School Teachers, Higher Education Administrators' Means in Masculinity, Femininity, Social Desirability, Self-Esteem, and Attitudes Toward Women, and the Significant Differences Between Sexes Within Each Group in Those Measurements

	College Students		Public School Teachers		Higher Education Administrators		Total	
Measurements	Male (N = 39)	Female (N = 72)	Male (N = 15)	Female (N = 54)	Male (N = 34)	Female (N = 34)	Male (N = 88)	Female (N = 160)
Masculinity	5.13	4.84*	5.23	5.06	5.47	5.38	5.29	5.05
Femininity	4.45	5.14**	4.72	5.19**	4.59	4.88*	4.57	5.09**
Social Desirability	4.98	5.13	5.12	5.25	5.51	5.62	5.21	5.27
Self-Esteem	2.57	2.63	2.65	2.54	2.76	2.99	2.65	2.68
Attitudes Toward Women	2.25	2.55**	2.40	2.73**	2.42	2.79**	2.34	2.66**

* significant at 0.05 level

** significant at 0.01 level